

# Congress of the United States

## House of Representatives

Washington, DC 20515

March 25, 2015

The Honorable Kay Granger  
Chairwoman  
Appropriations Subcommittee for  
State and Foreign Operations  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Nita Lowey  
Ranking Member  
Appropriations Subcommittee for  
State and Foreign Operations  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairwoman Granger and Ranking Member Lowey:

We write in strong support of our Diplomatic Corps and Foreign Service personnel serving abroad and urge you to prioritize funding for Worldwide Security Protection programs within the Department of State at the Administration's FY16 requested levels.

Threats to American personnel and installations abroad are continuously evolving, making it more critical than ever that our security teams have the tools and training to defend themselves and those working to further our diplomatic efforts. Complex engagements against American missions like the attack on the U.S. consulate in Herat, Afghanistan in 2013 and the recent disruption of service at our embassies in Yemen and Saudi Arabia serve as powerful reminders of the type of threats our Diplomatic corps face on a daily basis.

Unfortunately, a lapse in support or the failure to provide the necessary training and resources can result in much more than just a disruption of consular services. The attack on our diplomatic facility in Benghazi, Libya on September 11, 2012 demonstrated an increased need for specialized overseas security training for Foreign Service personnel and DS agents.

Currently, the Department of State is undertaking final planning and has made significant progress in developing a consolidated hard-skills security training center that will satisfy the acute needs for the training of our Foreign Service personnel within close proximity to Washington, D.C. and nearly a dozen critical National Security Partners. Skills training in long-range shooting, advanced explosives, night operations and tactical driving are recognized by the Department as mission critical for foreign security personnel and cannot be wholly accommodated at existing training facilities. Accordingly, we ask that you include the following report language to accompany the FY16 State and Foreign Operations appropriations legislation

*"The Committee recognizes the importance of Administration's request for \$99,134,000 to continue construction of the Foreign Affairs Security Training Center (FASTC) at Fort Pickett. As threats to American personnel and diplomatic installations continue to evolve, the Committee remains supportive of the Department of State's effort to consolidate diplomatic security training to a FASTC in order to improve efficiency and reduce costs."*

We recognize and appreciate the challenges facing the Appropriations Committee in our current fiscal climate and, after exhaustive study and analysis it remains clear that the continued development of a FASTC at Fort Pickett is the only plan that can provide the required training environment and long-term cost effectiveness to ensure the safety of our personnel serving overseas. We appreciate your consideration of this request and look forward to working with you on this important issue.

Sincerely,

J. R. Forke

Prin

Mr. B. C.

Donald E. Connolly

Robert J. Wittman

Bobby Smith

Barbara Comstock

Barry